



January 23, 2022

City of Alameda Planning Board
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190
Alameda, CA 94501

Subject: Housing Element – Proposed zoning amendments regarding definitions and regulations for residential and related land uses (Item 7-B on 1-24-22 Planning Board agenda)

Dear Planning Board members:

The proposed amendments would permit “multifamily dwellings” by right everywhere except in R-1. **The question of where multifamily is allowed by right should be deferred until the Housing Element strategy for residential zones is holistically considered and after more definitive estimates of how many RHNA units can be provided in nonresidential areas.** We believe that the Planning Board will be considering the residential areas in the next six weeks or so. Better estimates of RHNA units in nonresidential areas will hopefully be available by then. Proposing multifamily dwellings in R-2 through R-6 now before a more definitive estimate of how many RHNA units are needed in residential areas is jumping the gun.

In addition, allowing multifamily by right in R-2 through R-6, is in direct conflict with Article 26. **The Article 26 strategy would best involve the use of the multifamily overlay zone with the understanding that the overlay zone is mapped only to the degree necessary to achieve a compliant Housing Element as mandated by state law through the use of targeted preemptions of Article 26 as has been the City’s practice to date.** The multifamily overlay would also be better suited for identifying specific areas to be upzoned, since the overlay could overlap the base zone boundaries. It should not be assumed that the base zone boundaries necessarily correspond to areas that would be more or less appropriate for multifamily. The base zone boundaries are at least 50 years old. What might have been appropriate boundaries 50 years ago may not be the case today.

Proposing now to allow multifamily in R-2 through R-6 is also an inappropriately piecemeal approach. In addition to knowing how many RHNA units are needed in residential areas, any discussion of which residential areas, if any, should be upzoned to multifamily also needs to consider the specific areas to be upzoned, the intended residential density, the estimated number of units that can be obtained in each specific area and the mechanism to obtain these additional units, e.g. allowing a significant and perhaps an unlimited number of residential units within existing building envelopes as has been previously discussed vs. looking to additions and/or new construction to obtain these units. The identified specific areas should, among other things, be those where possible adverse impacts of upzoning on parking, infrastructure and historic buildings would be relatively minimal.

Related to the above, 79 permits for ADUs were issued in 2021, well above what was issued in 2020 and continuing an upward trajectory. In addition, staff estimates six additional SB9 units will be produced per year in the R-1 Zone, **which would result in a total of 85 RHNA units per year in the residential zones, or 680 units for the eight year RHNA period, well above the 480 units shown in staff's January 18 City Council Encinal Terminals presentation.** ADUs should steadily increase in 2022 and subsequent years as property owners, contractors, and architects get more familiar with ADU possibilities. The City should monitor monthly ADU production in 2022 and adjust the estimates (likely upward) as the Housing Element progresses based on the actual production. **Note that 680 ADU/SB9 units, rather than the 480 units shown in the January 18 presentation, would reduce the presentation's 450 units called for on other residential district sites to 250.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (510) 523-0411 or cbuckleyAICP@att.net if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Buckley, Chair
Preservation Action Committee
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

cc: Mayor and City Councilmembers (by electronic transmission)
Andrew Thomas and Allen Tai, Planning, Building, and Transportation Department (by electronic transmission)
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee (by electronic transmission)

Nancy McPeak

From: Dodi Kelleher <dodikelleher@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 11:37 AM
To: Alan Teague; Rona Rothenberg; Asheshh Saheba; Teresa Ruiz; Ronald Curtis; Xiomara Cisneros
Cc: Andrew Thomas; Gerry Beaudin; Erin Garcia; Nancy McPeak; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Malia Vella; John Knox White; Tony Daysog; Trish Spencer; City Clerk
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Housing Element - Proposed zoning amendments regarding definitions and regulations for residential and related land uses (Item 7-B on 1-24-22 Planning Board agenda)

Dear Planning Board Members and Staff,

This email is written as comment on the proposed zoning changes which would allow multi-family dwellings in the R-2 through R-6 zones by-right.

This part of the draft is in direct conflict with Article 26. Allowing multi-family of 3 or more units in R-2 through R-6 should use the multifamily overlay zone with the understanding that the overlay zone is used only as necessary to achieve a compliant Housing Element as mandated by state law.

In any event, it is premature proposal. The question of multi-family in these already dense residential areas should be deferred until there are better estimates of how many RHNA units can be provided in nonresidential areas, as well as a better estimate of how many ADUs are projected.

Sincerely,
Dolores Kelleher

Nancy McPeak

From: Lara Weisiger
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 12:21 PM
To: Nancy McPeak; Erin Garcia
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Item 7-B

Thanks!

Begin forwarded message:

From: Karen Miller <karenmillercrs@gmail.com>
Date: January 24, 2022 at 12:04:10 PM PST
To: Xiomara Cisneros <xcisneros@alamedaca.gov>, Alan Teague <ateague@alamedaca.gov>, Asheshh Saheba <asaheba@alamedaca.gov>, "truiz@alamedaca.govrcurtis@alamedaca.gov" <truiz@alamedaca.govrcurtis@alamedaca.gov>, "hhom@alamedaca.govclerk@alamedaca.gov" <hhom@alamedaca.govclerk@alamedaca.gov>
Cc: Lara Weisiger <lweisiger@alamedaca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 7-B

Dear Planning Board Members,

I am a long time Alameda resident and agree with the points being made by Chris Buckley and the AAPS. "Proposing multi-family dwellings in R-2thru R-6 now before a more definitive estimate of how many RHNA units are needed in residential areas is jumping the gun." Please defer a decision on this. Thank you.

Regards,

Karen Miller



This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.
www.avast.com

January 24, 2022

To: Asheshh Saheba; Teresa Ruiz; Hanson Hom; Alan Teague;
Xiomara Cisneros; Rona Rothenberg; rcurtis@alameda.gov

Cc: Nancy McPeak

From: Karen Bey

Subject: January 24, 2022 Planning Board Agenda-Item 7-B Public Workshop
Housing Element – R2-R6 Residential Land Uses

Looking at the current proposed 2023-2031 Housing Element, the west end will build about 44% of the total required low incoming housing units [995 units out of 2,239 low units]. If at least one of the shopping centers on the west end gets built as Mixed-Use Housing (MU), it will bring that number closer to 50%.

This doesn't include the emergency shelters units or transitional housing units in the pipeline – all of which are located on the west end.

Comparably, looking at the current proposed 2023-2031 Housing Element, the east end area will build about 10% of the total required low incoming housing units [228 units out of 2,239]. The 10% number includes 15% of the proposed 800 units at South Shore and 15% of the potential 225 units on Park Street.

To date, none of the emergency shelters or transitional housing units have been placed on the east end.

For all the talk about Fair Housing, there continues to be a huge disparity between the allocation of low income housing on the west end vs the east end even with the proposed changes to the Housing Element; and I am not seeing how the disparity will be resolved.

The argument is that California Fair Housing Laws require that we build equitably across the city, yet there is no clear pathway to do so. Alameda Point has a 25% affordable requirement, but everywhere else on the Island is 15%. This is one part of the inequity.

The California State Ordinance SB9 does not have an affordable component, and neither will the up zoning of the R2- R6 residential neighborhoods. There is no mandate to build affordable housing units in either of these two ordinances.

So how do we get there?

Perhaps one way to create more equity is the re-zoning of the vacant industrial buildings in the Northern Park Street District. There are a few large industrial buildings over 70,000 sq ft that can be re-designed to combine affordable and transitional housing units – like what is being built on McKay Ave.

The current zoning for the industrial buildings is North Park Street Maritime Manufacturing (NP–MM), so the zoning will have to be changed to do a development of this type.

Most of these industrial buildings have been sitting vacant for decades – I see an opportunity here to build equitably by converting these buildings to affordable and transitional housing.

Nancy McPeak

From: ps4man@comcast.net
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 3:48 PM
To: Hanson Hom; Rona Rothenberg; Teresa Ruiz; Asheshh Saheba; Alan Teague; Ronald Curtis; Xiomara Cisneros
Cc: Nancy McPeak; Andrew Thomas; Eric Levitt; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Malia Vella; John Knox White; Trish Spencer; Tony Daysog
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Item 7-B-Jan. 24 Planning Board Agenda-Housing Element Update-Zoning Code Amendments

I am resending the letter below to correct the failure to add additional cc: adresees.

From: ps4man@comcast.net <ps4man@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 3:41 PM
To: 'hhom@alamedaca.gov' <hhom@alamedaca.gov>; 'rrothenberg@alamedaca.gov' <rrothenberg@alamedaca.gov>; 'truiz@alamedaca.gov' <truiz@alamedaca.gov>; 'asaheba@alamedaca.gov' <asaheba@alamedaca.gov>; 'ateague@alamedaca.gov' <ateague@alamedaca.gov>; 'rcurtis@alamedaca.gov' <rcurtis@alamedaca.gov>; 'xcisneros@alamedaca.gov' <xcisneros@alamedaca.gov>
Cc: 'nmcpeak@alamedaca.gov' <nmcpeak@alamedaca.gov>
Subject: Item 7-B-Jan. 24 Planning Board Agenda-Housing Element Update-Zoning Code Amendments

Dear Planning Board Members:

I strongly support the Jan.23 letter to the Board submitted by AAPS objecting to the proposed amendments that would permit “multifamily dwellings” (three or more dwellings per unit) by right everywhere except in R-1. This proposal runs directly contrary to my understanding of Mr. Thomas’s consistent statements that including R-2 to R-6 or any part thereof in the new housing element (HE) should be deferred until the availability of all other sites in the city had been maximized. If our goal is the actual production of housing, not just assigning numbers to sites, there are very good reasons for this approach.

1. **Speculation v. Data-based Projections:** We have no significant data to indicate that upzoning R-2 to R-6 will actually produce a significant number of new dwellings other than ADU data that has only been in place for the past three years. However we have overwhelming data from our current HE driven development indicating that vacant land has produced thousands of new dwellings.

2. **Densifying Crowded Neighborhoods v. Vacant or Underutilized Space:** Several R-2 through R-6 neighborhoods already contain pre-Article 26 multi-family housing, so that they are already in excess of the current one unit per 2,000 sq. ft. requirement. This will create a level of density that is unsustainable regarding parking, water, sewer and other infrastructure needs, and reduction of our urban forest protection against carbon dioxide and heat.

These neighborhoods are already the source of some of the lowest rent housing in the city, so that any new development will necessarily result in major displacement of lower income tenants. HCD requires that these displaced tenants get monetary relocation assistance, comparable replacement housing and the right to reoccupy the newly developed structure. See <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/building-blocks/index.shtml> Increasing the density will significantly increase the land value of development sites. This, along with high construction costs will inevitably result in higher rents that current residents will be unable to pay. Instead of creating affordable housing the result will be gentrification.

Placing our housing in vacant or underutilized space, rather than R-2 to R-6, will mitigate or eliminate all of the negative aspects above and will actually produce a higher quality of life to the new residents and produce more open green space.

3. **Piecemeal vs. Efficient Production of Housing:** Production of housing in R-2 through R-6 will be a slow piecemeal process dealing with hundreds of different development applications. Production of housing in all of the other sites currently identified, with the exception of R-1, will be in large chunks by a small number of developers.

If you agree with me that R-2 to R-6 should be of the lowest priority for inclusion in the HE and avoided if possible, there is still a fly in the ointment in that it is unlikely that any new vacant or underutilized space will become available before we are required to submit our HE for approval by HCD. I submit that we do not need to have this resolved by that time.

Mr. Thomas has concurred with me that the Housing Element Law allows the city three years after the certification of our Housing Element to do the required upzoning which would give us until 2026 to do so. I suggest that we list Alameda Point with a reasonable capacity in excess of the Navy cap in a number sufficient to allow us to omit R-2 thru R-6 except as a "standby" site to be added to the HE only in the event that it is needed to meet our 5353 dwelling RHNA allocation by Jan. 1 2025. We would use the three reasons for this process itemized above as our justification. We would also advise HCD that we have a reasonable expectation that we will be able to meet our RHNA allocation without the inclusion of R-2 to R-6 because we are making significant efforts to remove the Navy cap before that date. Secondly we are constantly working to attract more development interest in the shopping centers and Park/Webster than the numbers now projected in the HE.

I thank you for consideration of my suggestion.

Paul S Foreman

Nancy McPeak

From: Lara Weisiger
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 4:31 PM
To: Nancy McPeak; Erin Garcia
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] There is no need to upzone Alameda and it will cause real harm

Thanks!

From: margie [mailto:barongcat@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022 4:27 PM
To: Xiomara Cisneros <xcisneros@alamedaca.gov>; Alan Teague <ateague@alamedaca.gov>; Rona Rothenberg <RRothenberg@alamedaca.gov>; Asheshh Saheba <asaheba@alamedaca.gov>; Teresa Ruiz <truiz@alamedaca.gov>; Ronald Curtis <rcurtis@alamedaca.gov>; Hanson Hom <hhom@alamedaca.gov>; City Clerk <CLERK@alamedaca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] There is no need to upzone Alameda and it will cause real harm

- (1) People have been moving out of the Bay Area for the last 3 years
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/California-and-Bay-Area-populations-decline-with-16711198.php>
- (2) No one is interested in moving into apartment buildings. I know of at least recently constructed "luxury" apartment houses that are half empty. There are 112 apartments and 29 houses for rent in Alameda as of today (per Trulia) This number has been essentially stable for months.
- (3) Urban trees fight climate change - but more apartment buildings will put trees at risk.
- (4) On many streets, parking is at a premium. Gridlock is currently a problem. Efforts to get people out of cars and into public transportation and bicycles have failed, repeatedly - public transportation is on the decline.
- (5) The availability of telecommunication means many employees can live anywhere. Making life in Alameda more crowded and less green will cause more people to move out - do you really want a ghost town?
- (6) "Making life easier for City Staff" is not a reason to do something that harms Alameda citizenry